

Hutton Cranswick CP School



Together We Achieve

Pupil Confidentiality Policy

Date Completed: March 2019

Review Date: March 2021

Hutton Cranswick CP School

Pupil Confidentiality Policy

Aims

Hutton Cranswick C P School understands that the safety, wellbeing and protection of pupils is of paramount importance. With this in mind, all pupils must be able to expect certain levels of trust when sharing personal information with school staff.

Pupils need to know that they can seek help from the school in a safe and confidential manner.

This policy guides school staff and visitors on the policy and procedures surrounding confidentiality.

Staff members adopt a supportive and accepting attitude towards pupils as part of their general responsibility for pastoral care. It is our hope that pupils and parents/carers feel free to discuss any concerns and worries they have, that may affect educational progress with members of the school team.

The Pupil Confidentiality Policy aims to:

- Promote a supportive and accepting ethos within the school.
- Safeguard the wellbeing of pupils.
- Build trust between pupils and staff.
- Empower pupils to exercise control over their situation and voice their concerns.
- Prevent the school dealing with each disclosure in isolation.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

2. Definitions

2.1. For the purpose of this policy, 'confidentiality' is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust will only be passed on to a third party with the prior agreement of the person disclosing it.

2.2. For the purpose of this policy, 'disclosure' is the sharing of any private information, but which is not solely in relation to child protection issues.

- 2.3. Disclosure of the contents of a conversation may be discussed with professional colleagues, but the confider is not identified except in pre-determined circumstances.
- 2.4. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a designated staff member responsible for ensuring the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is implemented by the entire school community, which ensures the wellbeing and protection of pupils.
- 2.5. At Hutton Cranswick C P School, the headteacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3. Policy application

- 3.1. This policy deals with personal information that may be divulged during the course of a school day. It is not meant to deal with certain extreme situations where there is an urgent need for the disclosure of information to relevant bodies.
- 3.2. In extreme situations, such as medical emergencies, staff members will pass on information as necessary for the wellbeing of the pupil.
- 3.3. All information about an individual pupil is private and will only be shared with staff members who have a legitimate need to know.
- 3.4. All data is processed and held in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- 3.5. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leads are responsible for referring the pupil's confidential information to multi-agency support services.
- 3.6. Staff members may not pass on confidential information unless they believe a child protection referral to the police or social services is necessary and the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leads do not agree.

4. Limits of confidentiality

- 4.1. In practice, there are few situations where absolute confidentiality can be offered. The school aims to strike a balance between confidentiality and trust, and ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of its pupils.
- 4.2. In almost all cases of disclosure, limited confidentiality is on offer.
- 4.3. The professional judgement of a teacher, counsellor or health professional is vital when considering whether to inform a pupil that a disclosure may be made in confidence, and whether such confidence could remain having heard the information.

5. One-to-one disclosures

- 5.1. Staff members will make it clear to pupils that they may have to pass on some information if they believe the pupil is at risk.
- 5.2. When concerns for a pupil come to the attention of staff, e.g. through observation of behaviour, injuries or disclosure (however insignificant these might appear), the member of staff always discusses the issue with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

5.3. In accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, more serious concerns, such as those involving potential abuse, are immediately reported to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the pupil is accessed as early as possible.

6. Disclosures to health professionals

6.1. Health professionals, such as the school nurse, may give confidential information to pupils, provided the information is in regards to the pupil's wellbeing, and they are competent to do so and follow the correct procedures.

6.2. The school nurse is skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people. On a need-to-know basis, the school nurse may share information with appropriate staff in to enable improved support for pupils.

7. Breaking confidentiality

When confidentiality must be broken because a pupil may be at risk of harm, in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the school will ensure the following:

Pupils are told when the information has been passed on

Pupils are kept informed about what will be done with the information

To alleviate their fears about everyone knowing, pupils are told exactly who their information has been passed on to

7.1. The headteacher is to be informed of any child protection concerns.

7.2. Staff members are contractually obliged to immediately inform the headteacher.

7.3. Staff members are not obliged to inform the police on most matters relating to illegal activity, such as illegal drugs or assaults; instead, these are assessed on a case-by-case basis with the support of the senior leadership team.

7.4. Staff members are not permitted to pass on personal information about pupils indiscriminately.

8. Guidance for teaching staff

8.1. The safety and protection of the pupil is the paramount consideration in all confidentiality decisions.

8.2. Staff members are not obliged to break confidentiality unless there is a child protection concern.

8.3. Staff members are encouraged to share their concerns about pupils in a professional and supportive way.

8.4. In extreme cases, staff in breach of this policy may face disciplinary action, if it is deemed that confidential information was passed on to a third party without reasonable cause.

8.5. The following principles are adhered to when supporting pupils:

Personal matters are discussed in an appropriate time and place

Pupils with concerns are spoken to in confidence as soon as possible

Where there are child protection concerns, the pupil is always spoken to in confidence before the end of the school day

Pupils are told, prior to disclosures, that a staff member cannot guarantee confidentiality if they think a pupil is being hurt by others, hurt themselves, or hurt someone else

Pupils are not interrogated or asked leading questions

Pupils are not placed in the position of having to repeat the disclosure to several people

Pupils will be informed before any information is shared

Where appropriate, pupils are told to confide in their parents/carers

8.6. Staff members may find themselves dealing with highly personal issues and potentially upsetting disclosures. With this mind, staff members are encouraged to seek help from the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are unsure about how to respond to a situation.

8.7. The school has access to several external agencies that specialise in providing advice and support.

9. External visitors

9.1. All external visitors are made aware of the Pupil Confidentiality Policy and work within its limits when interacting with pupils.

9.2. Healthcare professionals work within their codes of confidentiality when delivering their services within the school.

10. Informing parents/carers

10.1. The school works with parents/carers to create a partnership of trust. It endeavours to inform parents/carers of their child's progress and behaviour.

10.2. When a pupil discusses a personal matter with a staff member, they are encouraged to share the information with their parents/carers, unless there is an identifiable child protection risk associated.

10.3. Where a staff member believes a child protection risk is posed in regards to the family of the pupil, following a disclosure, the staff member will immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and local safeguarding officer.

11. Dissemination

11.1. All parents/carers are made aware of the school's Pupil Confidentiality Policy and are informed that a copy can be viewed on the school website.

11.2. Parents/carers are made aware that the school cannot offer complete confidentiality if they deem a pupil is at risk from harm.

12. Policy review

12.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the headteacher.

The scheduled review date for this policy is March 2021.

